

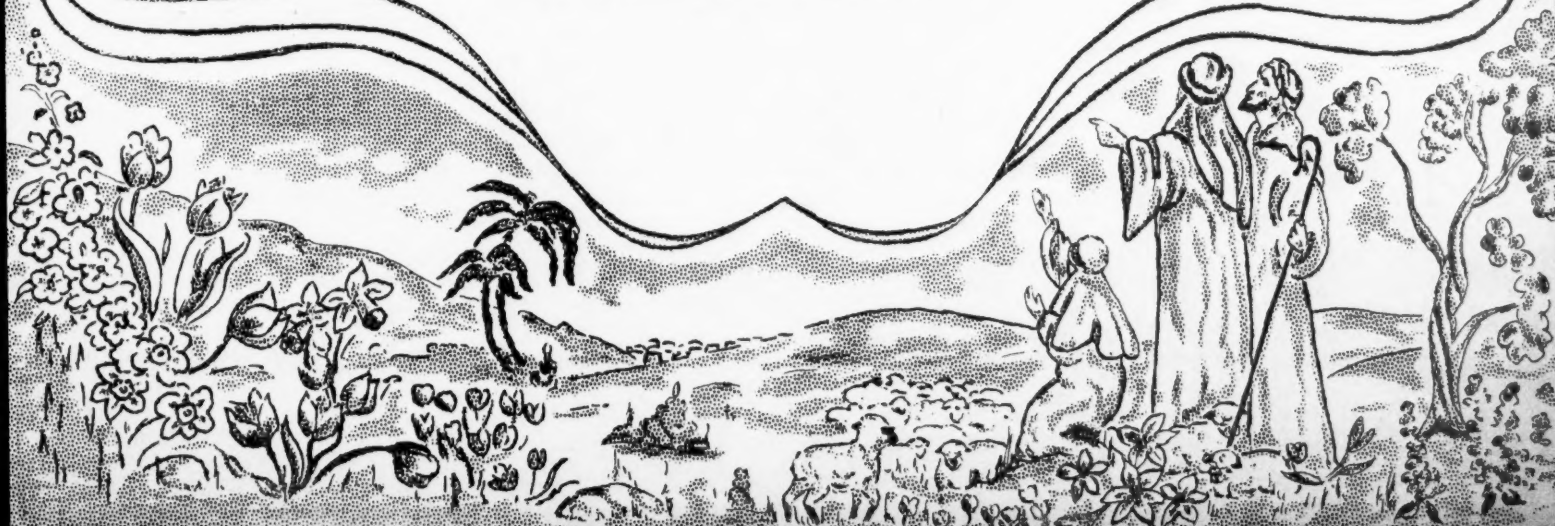


Megiddo Message

Vol. 46, No. 6

March 21, 1959

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth
peace, good will toward men."



Megiddo Message

Vol. 46, No. 6 March 21, 1959
Kenneth E. Flowerday, Acting Editor
A religious magazine, devoted to the cause
of Christ and published for the dissemina-
tion of Bible truth alone. The MEGIDDO
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- Strengthen your faith in the Bible
- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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LETTERS

From a Junior Reader

Dear Sister:

This evening we read, "I Have Given You an Example." It was very good. Jesus always practiced what He taught. He denounced the practices of the Jews. They were done for show, and not from the heart. Conformity to the Word of God is a virtue we must possess. Prayer helps to make decisions. After spending the night in prayer (Luke 6: 12), He chose the twelve apostles. Jesus prayed for Peter that his faith should not fail. He never harbored a grudge. He is a perfect, living example for us to follow. He was not sad, but cheerful. We must imitate His example, and follow in His footsteps.

Crystal Beach, Fla.

R. S.

Finding the Water Holes

Dear Sister:

There was once a weary traveler, going through the hot desert lands seeking to find gold; and on his journey his water supply was low and his tongue and throat became dry and parched. Every once in a while he would wet a cloth and massage his mouth and then would sip a little water. Finally, his water was gone and he had not reached his destination. All the water holes that he came upon were poisoned and he did not dare to drink for fear that he would die before his ambitions were fulfilled. Just before he reached his destination, he found a water hole of pure water and he drank until he could drink no more.

We are this weary traveler. We are passing through this dry land of Egypt (where no one will accept the truth), seeking an eternal home of bliss. As we begin our travel through the hot and dusty roads and our bodies long for the fresh and pure water of life, we find many water holes of superstitions, paganism, and fables. . . . We realize that we must pass up all these water holes of superstition, paganism, fables, anger, strife, envy, evil speaking, and jealousy, and search for the water holes of God's Truth—the pure, wholesome water that Jesus told the Samaritan woman about.

Hartsville, S. C.

V. S.

The Force of Faith

Dear Sister:

Thank you for your many good words of wisdom. Every day we should read and take note of the things that will increase our faith, knowing that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10: 17). Faith is emphasized over and over again throughout the Bible.

Our faith is a real creative force within us which produces victory over all that is evil. "It is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11: 1).

In closing, let us remember these good words found in Mark 9: 23, "To him that believeth all things are possible."

St. Joseph, Mo.

H. I. W.

The Nativity of Christ

"GLORY to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men," was the theme of the immortal anthem that was sung to those humble shepherds on the night of Christ's birth. And some day, some glad sweet day, this promise of peace and good will shall be fulfilled throughout the earth, and Jesus, whose birth was announced that day by angelic beings, shall reign as King over all.

A few months prior to this the Angel Gabriel had been sent to "a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph . . . and the virgin's name was Mary." How pure and blameless must have been the character of this maiden to be chosen for such a wonderful service! How her heart must have leaped at the salutation of the angel, "Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women." And then the angel delivered the message: "Thou shalt bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Mary had implicit faith in God—a wonderful example to us. Hear her humble reply: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to Thy word."

In due time came the journey to Bethlehem to keep the feasts. Joseph and Mary were both descendants of the house of David and it was the custom of the family to attend the cluster of feasts held around the first of the year and extending over to the Passover, Abib 14. While there the great event was fulfilled which changed the history of nations and began a new era of time, the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

We are often asked why we celebrate the Nativity at this time, and in answer we will give evidence from both Bible and history which leads us to believe that Jesus was born at this particular season. But first, for the benefit of some who say it does not matter which day we celebrate we will cite some very condemning evidence to show that Dec. 25th was never the true date, but is strictly of pagan origin, and, sad to say, while there are some who think of the Christ-child, it is celebrated by the masses today in strictly pagan fashion. Hilarity, feasting, revelry, and extravagance, are the order of the day.

Not only is the celebration of the Nativity on Dec. 25 of pagan origin, but the present calendar has its roots in paganism. Several months of the year and all the days of the week were named after pagan gods or goddesses. January was named after the pagan god Janus, February after another pagan deity, and March after the heathen god of war, Mars, and so on. The first day of the week was called Sun's Day because of the worship of the sun; the second, Moon's Day, because of moon worship, and so on through the week to the last day which was called Saturday after the pagan god Saturn. No such names are to be found in the Bible.

Early Church Turned to Paganism

The facts are that in the early centuries the world was

largely pagan, and Christ's true church, after a period of rapid growth, began to apostatize, gradually taking in the doctrines and practices of the pagan nations by which they were surrounded. When she turned away from God's truth she also turned away from God's time. And this very thing was foretold by the Prophet Daniel. We read in chapter 7: 25 that a great power would arise that would change God's times and laws. That this prophecy was fulfilled is verified on the pages of history. The year formerly began in March, and according to the Encyclopedia Britannica many countries followed this method, and as late as 1752 England still began her year in March. From another encyclopedia we read this sentence: "The earliest chronology in the West fixed on March 25 as the date of the Nativity." This is quite an important link in our chain of potential evidence.

No one, these days, needs to remain uninformed about the heathen origin of the Christmas festival, as each year during December our leading dailies carry long articles covering the history of its origin. An article that appeared in a Washington paper some years ago is typical of these. Under the caption, "Origin of Christmas, its associations and superstitions," we read: "Though 600,000,000 Christians the world over celebrate Christmas year after year, comparatively few are aware that the observance can be traced to pagan festivals antedating Christianity many centuries. Contrary to the popular belief Christmas is not the anniversary of the birth of Christ. It is evident that Christ was not born at Christmas time, for the Bible says that the flocks were out grazing, and that does not happen in the Holy Land in midwinter. The actual date was probably sometime in the spring. . . . When the new style calendar was adopted the observance fell on December 25. That period was already the main pagan festival—the feast of the winter solstice—and it was natural to celebrate the Christmas festival at the same time. Though Christmas is a Christian celebration, it has borrowed many rites from the pagan festivities of Europe and Asia."

From James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough* we read the following: "Christmas is nothing but an old heathen celebration of the winter solstice. . . . We have seen that many peoples have been used to observe an annual period of license, when the customary restraints of law and morality are thrown aside, when the whole population give themselves up to extravagant mirth and jollity, and when the darker passions find a vent which would never be allowed them in the more staid and sober course of ordinary life. Such outbursts of the pent-up forces of human nature . . . occur most commonly at the close of the year. Now of all these periods of license, the one which is best known is the Saturnalia. This famous festival fell in December, the last month of the Roman year, and was popularly supposed to commemorate the merry reign of Saturn."

From a work styled "*Christmas, Its Origin and Associations*," by William Dawson, we read: "The Saxons and other Northern nations kept a festival at this time of the year in honor of Thor, in which they mingled feast-

ing, drinking and dancing with sacrifices and religious rites."

December 25 Birthday of the Sun

You may wonder why the change was made from March 25 to December 25. We are told by these same writers that the reason was this: "It was the custom of the heathen to celebrate on the same twenty-fifth of December the birthday of the sun. Accordingly when the doctors of the church perceived that the Christians had a leaning to this festival, they took counsel and resolved that the Nativity should be solemnized on that day." And a historian remarks, "The ceremonies of Christian worship were accommodated as far as possible to those of the heathen, that new converts might not be too much startled at the change, and at Christmas festivals Christians indulged in revels closely resembling those of the Saturnalia." From the *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* we read: "The pagan festival with its riot and merrymaking was so popular that Christians were glad to continue the celebration with little change in spirit or manner."

The Bible states, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Knowledge brings responsibility. Since we know these things, can we as Christians consistently observe the anniversary of so sacred an event on December 25th, a time devoted to pagan worship, revelry, lawlessness and licentiousness?

The First Month of God's Year

Now let us turn to the blessed Book and learn when God's year began. Turning to Exodus 12:1, 2, we read: "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you." Notice that the command is explicit. This month shall be—not the second, nor the third, but—the *first* month of the year to His people. We have no record that God ever changed the beginning of the year. Now let us find the name of this month. God furnishes us with this information in ch. 13:4, "This day came ye out in the month Abib." In the 6th and 11th verses of chapter 12 we learn that the passover was observed on the fourteenth day of this month. Again in Deut. 16:1 we read: "Observe the month Abib, and keep the passover unto the Lord thy God: for in the month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night." This, too, is a direct command, "Observe the month Abib."

In the Hebrew all names are significant. Hence the word "Abib," means, "The month of green ears, beginning at the new moon of April or March. The first month of the old year as instituted on coming out of the land of Egypt; it also denotes the month of flowers." This month began with the first new moon after the vernal equinox. Now what is the meaning of the word "month"? According to the lexicon it means, "The new moon, the day of the new moon, the calends of a lunar month which was a festival of the ancient Hebrews. A lunar month beginning at the new moon." Remember this point: the year and month would always begin with the new moon.

Now having established Abib as the first month of the sacred year, and having fixed the first new moon after the Spring Equinox as the starting point for the year—it should be understood however that under this arrangement the year starts with a different day each year, re-

peating in a nineteen-year cycle—let us study the record with the idea of fixing the true season of Christ's birth.

Referring again to Deut. 16:1 we read: "Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the Lord thy God: for in the month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night." Two commands appear to be couched in the words of this one text. "Observe the month of Abib," which seems to refer to its priority as the first month of the year, and which celebration would fall on the first of the month; also, "keep the passover unto the Lord thy God." The passover fell on Abib 14, the night when the people actually left Egypt. We are making these observations with the idea of creating a build-up for some connection between the Abib celebration and Mary's and Joseph's being at Bethlehem when Christ was born.

We learn from Numbers 10:10; 28:11; Ezra 3:4, 5, and other texts, that they were commanded to solemnize a feast day, or day of sacrifice, at the beginning of each month, hence when the new moon feast or sacrifice is mentioned it is difficult to absolutely tie it in with the Abib or new moon feast.

In I Samuel 20 is the account of King Saul's attempt to take David's life because of jealousy. For safety reasons David planned to be absent the following feast days, which easily could have been the Abib or new year feast. He said to his bosom friend, Jonathan, Saul's son, "If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked leave of me that he might run to Bethlehem his city: for there is a yearly sacrifice [feast, margin] for all the family" (v. 6).

A Significant New Moon Feast

Psalms 81 speaks again of a new moon of some special significance: "Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp and the psaltery. Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day. For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob" (vs. 2-4). The following verses seem to tie it in with the time of their leaving Egypt which was during the month of Abib: "This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt: where I heard a language that I understood not. I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots" (vs. 5, 6).

When Christ was born in Bethlehem it might well have been this time of the new moon. It also involved the house of David, and as the account in Luke 2 points out, "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn" (vs. 1-7).

The taxing in this connection seems to be incidental, placed at a time of tribal assemblage for the convenience

(Continued on page 10)

Editorial . . .

STANDING upon the threshold of the departing year and at the portals of the new it is but fitting that we take a backward look, a retrospective view, of the varied scenes and experiences it has brought into our lives, not, however, to brood over the trials which may have fallen to our lot, nor to revel in memory in whatever pleasures we may have enjoyed; but by a careful and unbiased scrutiny to weigh well each experience, failure or success, and wherever we find we have been weak or lacking in our duty to God or man, to draw therefrom a lesson by which to profit in the future. Such analysis will enable us to build high heaps around the pitfalls with which our pathway is beset that we may not again fall therein.

The Forward Look

We can then give a parting wave of the hand to the old year and step over the threshold into the new with greater strength, increased zeal and a firm resolution to run the race unto the end, saying with our noble brother Paul, "Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

By looking forward Paul could endure persecutions and afflictions and count them but inconsequential that he might win Christ. Looking forward, we, too, can lift ourselves above the petty things which occupy the mind of the common lot. It will also enable us to grasp the meaning and purpose of life. By the forward look life becomes definite, distinctive, positive. Through it we can cast doubt and indecision behind us; these belong to the negative forces which drag us backward and downward. Jesus' doctrine was a positive one: He taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes. When we look into this perfect law of liberty and continue therein, our feet firmly planted on its blessed promises, we too can live the positive life and speak with authority concerning the things toward which we are looking.

The continuous forward look tends to extend our horizon, giving us the broader vision by which we can look above and beyond the cares and trials of every day life to the future and eternal things. We now look out upon a world filled with tumult, strife, unrest, warfare, crime, sorrows and troubles which make the head sick and the heart faint, but the broader vision enables us to say, "This, too, will pass away," and in its stead will stand officers of peace and exactors of righteousness: a King is coming who "will have dominion from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth." We can rejoice that the time is drawing near when,

"Man to man united,
And every wrong thing righted,
The whole world shall be lighted."

Yes, and when doubt and unbelief will give place to knowledge positive and assuring; "for the earth shall be

full of the knowledge and glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

It seems that too many Christians have lost the ability of looking ahead. We are too concerned with our immediate surroundings, our day to day life, what the world is doing and the faults of our friends and neighbors to spend much time thinking of what we are working for.

A successful person always works toward a goal. He always keeps the goal in mind, pressing forward to reach that goal. The highest paid executives in this world are the men who have the ability to plan ahead, to foresee what the future has in store, and guide their destinies accordingly.

We as Christians have the greatest incentive for the forward look. The great Creator has formulated a plan in which we may participate if we are able to meet His requirements. We need not be concerned over the success or failure of this plan, for its Architect has never been known to fail. But we will never participate in the glories of the future unless we keep looking ahead.

The worthies of old, our examples in the struggle to gain eternal life were ever looking forward. Abraham at seventy-five years of age left his home, his friends, his relatives, journeyed through a strange land, where there was no food, even lost his wife for a time, but he never lost the forward look. He looked for a City—whose builder and Maker is God. He not only prospered in this life but by following strictly God's commands, he will enjoy eternal life in the future.

Who could better exemplify "the forward look" than Joseph? As a youth, tending sheep on a lonely hillside, hated of his brothers and finally betrayed by them and sold as a slave, again betrayed and cast into prison he nevertheless rose to the highest position Pharaoh could bestow upon him. His position in Christ's coming Kingdom is also assured. All because he kept looking ahead, not being turned aside by petty annoyances, or what would seem to us to be major catastrophies. His trust in God's plan was complete and he never lost sight of it.

We could cite many examples of Christians who while enduring many unpleasant experiences have never failed to look ahead. They have risen above their own feelings, the ridicule and condemnation of unthinking and false brethren, physical pain and even endured violent death without renouncing their faith.

Perhaps Christians in this age have even a more severe trial to endure than those of any other age. Walking entirely by faith, in the cool of the day, surrounded by luxury and physical comforts unknown in any other age we are fortunate indeed if we do not become victims of apathy. Here is where "the forward look" is especially important. As time stretches out and our faith is tested on every side we must not forget our goal, what we are working for. The phrase: "Keep the prize in view," may be trite but it has helped many a sailor on life's stormy sea. We are working for the greatest reward it is possible to receive. We have no reason to doubt the success of God's plan, everything will turn out exactly as scheduled. In addition we must not doubt our ability to be a part of that plan.

H. G. Wells, the author, often wrote the last chapter of a story first to keep the plot from going astray. Let us determine, as we enter this new year, to make a life-plot for ourselves, the way we want the last chapter to turn out.

At the Dawn of the New Year

As a separate people, set apart from the creeds and faiths, the wide world over, the members of the Megiddo Mission Church will observe April 8, 1959 as the New Year, and also pay honor to our Saviour's birth, a time not instituted by the pagans, but as indicated in the Scripture.

Bible time is reckoned by the moon; and the spring equinox, which determines the beginning of the year, occurs, this year, on March 20. The new moon which follows will rise at 10:29 P. M., April 7, according to The Farmer's Almanac.

The day, according to Scripture, is "from even to even" (Lev. 23:32). Therefore the first day of the New Year would follow at sundown, April 8 to sundown, April 9. In the light of reason, does it not seem altogether more appropriate to observe the true New Year, when all nature comes to life after a period of rest and sleep during the winter months? Had we, from infancy, been instructed that such was the right time to observe the New Year, it would seem as natural as for Christendom to observe January 1st. Should a child be educated to believe that Los Angeles was located on the east coast of the United States, and New York on the west, it would, in faith, believe such to be correct, but this would not make it so.

As the child grew older and became able to reason and study for himself, or the erroneous teaching was pointed out to him, would he not discard the error of his earlier education and acknowledge the facts of the location of the two cities? Without the least doubt, he would.

While the observation of Christ's natal day or that of the New Year is not absolutely commanded, "honor to whom honor is due" is a Bible principle (Rom. 13:7).

In a day when Dec. 25 is so extravagantly observed as Christ's birthday, with so much hilarity, merriment and so much commercialism, commemorating the anniversary at the proper season helps a Christian to establish his resistance to an overwhelming trend. The command is "be not conformed to this world," but to "come out from among them and be ye separate and I will receive you, saith the Lord."

By the people of God a cluster of feasts were observed in the beginning month, Abib, including Passover (Abib 13) and the anniversary of Christ's resurrection, (Abib 15), which fall this year on April 20, and April 22 respectively.

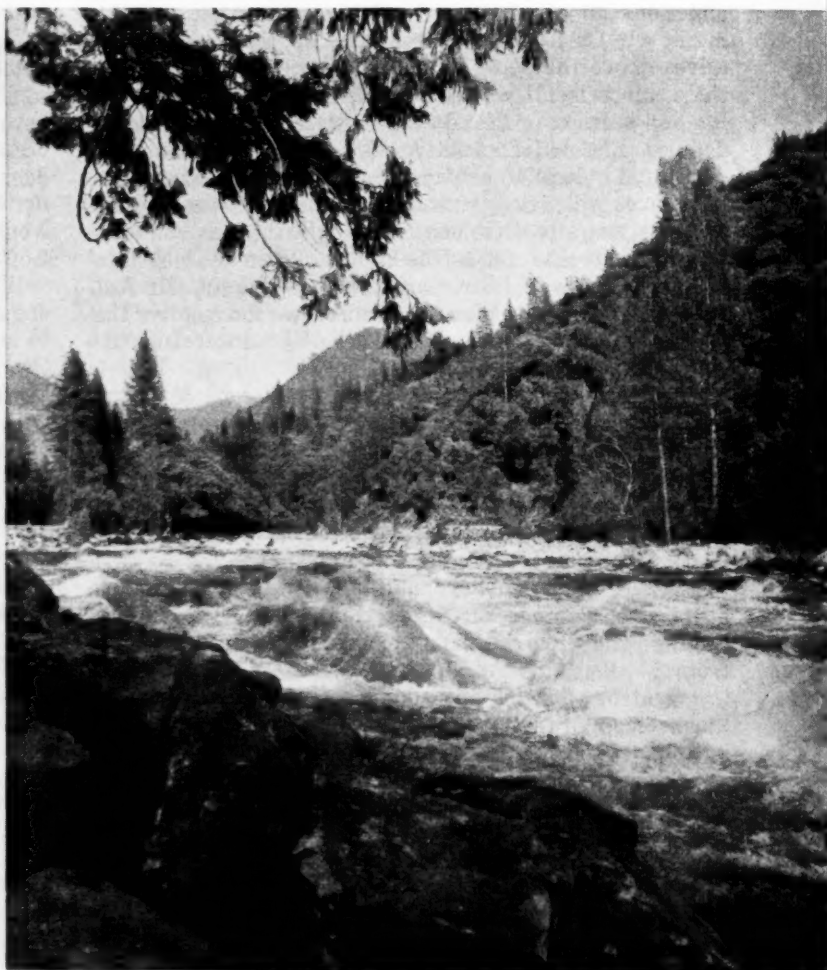
May the coming days of this year bring to our readers the peace that passeth understanding which only comes to those who love His Law.

Star of Truth

O star of Truth, down shining
Through clouds of doubt and fear,
I ask but 'neath thy guidance
My pathway may appear.
However long the journey,
How hard soe'er it be,
Though I be lone and weary,
Lead on, I'll follow thee!

I know thy blessed radiance
Can never lead astray,
However ancient custom
May tread some other way.
E'en if through untrod deserts,
Or over trackless sea,
Though I be lone and weary,
Lead on, I'll follow thee!

Though loving friends forsake me,
Or plead with me in tears,—
Though angry foes may threaten
To shake my soul with fears,—
Still to my high allegiance
I must not faithless be:
Through life or death, forever
Lead on, I'll follow thee!



The Resurrection of Lazarus

INTRODUCTION

All through His ministry Jesus sought to identify Himself to the people as the Messiah whose coming was foretold centuries before by the prophets and sages. He revealed the fact of His Sonship plainly to His close associates and implied His identity many times in His discourses and parables, such as—The Wicked Husbandmen, The Marriage of the King's Son, and The Householder. But the people in general were unbelieving, even as they are today. His momentous second advent will be met with the same diffidence and skepticism. For in Jesus' own words He says, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" He was shunned for His lowly station in life, despised for His humble, human parentage and hated for His holiness. It seemed to require the performance of mighty miracles to enforce on the minds of the people that here was someone above the status of an ordinary prophet. The sickness and death of His friend Lazarus presented an outstanding opportunity whereby Jesus manifested His power to the glory of God and to prove that He was indeed the Son of God. Lazarus was chosen for the signal honor of being resurrected after having been dead already four days. The miracle was so stupendous and performed so near Jerusalem that it had a profound effect on the people of the capital. It was the cause of the enthusiastic reception of Jesus a few days later when entering into the city when He presented Himself as the Messiah. It also brought the Sanhedrin to their decision to put Him to death; for the people were hailing Him as King, and if they should accept Him and His undisguised preaching of humble submission to present authority, all hope of their rising against the Romans and endeavoring to restore the Kingdom of David would vanish. The rulers decided that it were better for one man to perish, whether he were guilty or not, rather than for the whole nation to be lost.

ON THE eastern slope of the mount of Olives, fully a mile and a half beyond the summit, and not very far from the point at which the road to Jericho begins a sudden descent toward the Jordan valley, is situated the village of Bethany. This entire section beyond Jerusalem, in the time of Jesus, was covered with gardens, groves and plantations of fig, almond and olive trees, enclosed by hedges and walls. Once outside the southeast gates of the great city, the breezes blew fresh from the hills, the air laden with the fragrance from blossoms of the fruit trees, the profusion of lilies and all kinds of flowers. After being confined within the walls of Jerusalem with its narrow, winding streets, their traffic and noise, it was a relief to leave it all behind and seek the peace and quiet of the open countryside. As when in Galilee, Jesus often found solace and comfort from the soothing effect of the sea while meditating by its shores, so likewise, the short journey over the quiet country road brought restful interludes in the Master's busy life.

Bethany was much as any of the other neighboring villages with its many flat-roofed houses scattered about, following no special plan or pattern and one or two paved

streets through the main section. On the very southwest outskirts of the village and set off by itself was the home of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. It was a large, two-story house, the type often belonging to people who were above the average in social rank and prosperity. The cool, open porches with their vines and the flower-covered trellises nearby, made such a place a haven from the controversies and tumults of Jerusalem.

In one of the upper chambers of this comfortable home lay Lazarus who, a few days before had been suddenly stricken with a progressive malady. The smitten young man had asked intermittently for his friend Jesus and it was indeed painful for his sisters, upon his repeated requests, to have to tell him that Jesus had gone to Bethabara beyond Jordan where He abode with some of His disciples. Then came the hour when the physicians, with their limited knowledge and ability to heal, had to admit that they could offer no further hope for his recovery.

Martha and Mary had been tenderly caring for their brother, and now, when it seemed his life was ebbing, they took turns ministering to his needs so that one was constantly by his bedside. Certain of their friends, upon learning of his serious condition, urged Martha, who was then in attendance, to immediately send for their friend Jesus who, no doubt, could save him. To this plan she readily agreed. But Mary, who was now asleep, resting from a long vigil, must also know and consent to her plans. But night was falling fast! In times of great stress, when life hangs in the balance, the course of nature often intervenes, and one must wait through the long hours of the night to take action. As the first rays of daylight appeared, Martha lost no time to awaken Mary and told of her intention to send for Jesus. This decision had an enlivening effect on Mary, who, uttering a cry of joy, exclaimed: "Yes, Jesus has power to heal him, and He loves him! He will come and save him the moment He hears of his danger." And so amid tears of joy in their new-born hope, the sisters hurriedly wrote on a slip of parchment, these brief and touching words: "Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick! Hasten to come to us, that he may live; for nothing is impossible with thee."

This message in the early hours of the morning was forthwith dispatched by the hands of a young friend to Bethabara, more than a full day's journey from Bethany to where Jesus was staying, preaching the gospel of the Kingdom and healing all who came to Him.

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The dread hand of disease had fallen heavily upon this little household of Bethany, and stricken down its prop, smitten the oak, around which clung these vine-like sisters, and vine-like in their dependence upon him and confiding trust in his wisdom and love. He aided in the support of his sisters and they, in turn labored with the needle, embroidering robes for the priests, and gowns for the rulers' wives, in order to lighten their brother's burdens. Realizing how much depended upon him, Lazarus, early in life, tried his hand at all of the few occupations of that day and soon had the reputation of being the most industrious youth in the village. But there was a certain

kind of work he loved far more than these, one which his father (who had been well-learned in writing and teaching according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God) had taught him years before. It was that of copying out rolls of the Prophets, for the use of the various synagogues. How thrilled he would be when reading or copying those portions of Scriptures relating to Jesus! For instance, that which the Prophet Micah foretold of His birth and rulership: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel."

He noted that the Prophet Isaiah spoke of the coming King more than any of the other prophets: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, ... [the Father of the world to come,] The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David."

Lazarus had long been familiar with these passages, but with the arrival of the great Teacher Himself, what light He shed upon their meaning! Never did he imagine that he—humble Lazarus—would ever be privileged to associate with the Holy Messiah and future King of all the earth! How the hearts of that little family at Bethany burned within them as they sat in their home with Jesus, who, beginning at Moses, unfolded the Scriptures to them, explaining all the things concerning Himself! Nearly of the same age, a holy friendship had sprung up between them, and Lazarus so loved the Anointed One of God, that he would readily have laid down his life for Him.

Not only did he possess the qualities of sincerity and unswerving loyalty which are the basis of any worthwhile friendship, but above all, Lazarus understood. That is, his was not just a mental grasp, but understanding in its profoundest sense. He looked deep into his Friend's soul and there saw and felt and understood the conflicts of that soul—its temptations and natural desires and its struggle to overcome them; the stupendous responsibility that rested upon Him because of His Messiahship; the courage needed to withstand the opposition of the religious leaders; the scoffing and unbelief; the crosses the Master was bearing as an Example to His true followers down through the centuries, and the still greater ones that awaited Him. All this tumultuous stirring of His soul Lazarus perceived and felt with such a sympathetic understanding, that he seemed to bear them with his Friend, and to Jesus it was an immeasurable source of consolation.

The popularity of Jesus through His mighty works of healing all manner of diseases, feeding thousands with a few loaves and fishes and changing water into wine, caused the people to wonder who He could be. Was He a prophet of God? Some believed He was. The Jewish people had not had a prophet since the days of Malachi; he was the last one and that was over 400 years ago. Perhaps, now at last, God had remembered His people and was sending them someone to free their race from the despicable Roman yoke! A few ventured timidly that one who could perform such mighty miracles might possibly be the Messiah! Others cried aloud that He did His miracles by Beelzebub, prince of devils! The envious rulers and hypocritical Pharisees convinced themselves that He was

a pretender and false prophet. A few of the more learned began to search the scrolls in the synagogues to acquaint themselves with the prophecies concerning the Messiah. Others, who could afford to, ordered copies made for their use at home.

For many months before his illness, Lazarus had become more and more devoted to his work in the copy-room of the synagogue, at times laboring day and night. Not a few people of the more educated class would make visits to ask questions on the scriptures; some to dispute, but also to satisfy their curiosity concerning the origin and mission of the Prophet who could perform such miracles. One night, just before Lazarus was completing a portion of Scripture and was ready to depart, he heard voices at the entrance of his work chamber. Looking up, he was astonished to behold one of the chief rulers of the synagogue—the wise and solemn-faced Nicodemus with his friend, Simon the Pharisee.

"Pardon us, Lazarus," he said in a deep, cultured voice, "that we come to thee by night. We are glad to find thee alone, for we would ask thee many things."

"Speak, and if possible, I shall be glad to answer thy questions," volunteered Lazarus.

"I know," said the ruler of the Pharisees, "that thou art a close friend of Jesus who has become famous for His mighty works. That He is a Prophet sent of God, I believe, as do most men; for only by power from on high, could anyone perform the miracles which daily come to our attention. But He would have us believe He is the Son of God, yea, the Messiah Himself which was for to come—a King, whose name should be called Wonderful . . ."

"Just one moment," interrupted Lazarus, "I will ask thee a question first: From whence is the Christ to come?"

"He is the son of David and cometh out of Bethlehem."

"Yes, that is so," and pointing to shelves with rolls of parchment of all sorts, much of it yellow with age, he continued. "The records here state He is the son of Joseph and Mary, of the lineage of David's house. The record of His birth I have seen, and so also have Caiaphas and other of the rulers. Thou canst examine for thyself."

"Then whence is it that He cometh out of Nazareth of Galilee?" quickly asked the curious and doubting Simon.

"I will tell thee," answered Lazarus. "His parents dwelt in Nazareth, and as they sojourned at Bethlehem, to be registered for taxation in their own family town, David's town, Jesus was born! Thus He is of the line of David, of the town of Bethlehem, and also as it was prophesied of Him, a Nazarene."

"I know that His lineage may be ascertained without a doubt from the records of the tribes, and of their families, kept by the command of the law in the Temple. In fact," continued Nicodemus with his usual gravity, "they are kept with the greatest accuracy, and so ordained by God, for the very reason that when Messiah cometh we may know whether He who claims to be such, be of the house of David or no. I will examine the book of the Generations and see if His mother and father come of the stock and seed of David."

"And if you find that they do," eagerly asked Lazarus, his face aglow with expectancy, "can you doubt any longer whether Jesus be the Christ? Will you ask more? Will you believe?"

"Yea, but how read the Prophets, that Messiah is to be King, whose name should be called Wonderful, Counsel-

lor, with power and majesty? He shall sit on His throne and rule forever as the glory of Israel?" asked the ruler.

"Ah, that is the kind of king after my own heart," interposed Simon; "the powerful ruler that all Israel looks for."

"I say," continued Nicodemus, "how can we reconcile these dazzling prophecies of Isaiah, Moses and other prophets with this obscure young man, unlearned in letters, without rank and without the slightest pretense of power or influence?"

Simon could hold his doubts in abeyance no longer. "Think of it, the son of the poor carpenter Joseph whom everybody knows, of the remote town of Nazareth! He has not a single qualification to confirm our nation's conception of the majesty and power of the coming Messiah. Therefore, I cannot accept His claim." Before he finished his remarks, Lazarus was ready with his answer: "Oh, the darkness, the blindness of all the priesthood and of those who should know better, to see in the Messianic prophecies only the passages which speak of His glory and power, and pass by those which as certainly foretell of His humiliation, trials, yes—and death! Have you never read what Isaiah saith of Christ apart from His greatness?"

Without waiting for an answer, Lazarus procured a lamp, and holding it above a certain roll of parchment he had selected from similar dozens of others, he began to slowly read: "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; *so shall his visage be glorious among men.*"

"If the first part of this prophecy," said Lazarus, his eyes lighting with interest as he looked at Nicodemus, "be of Christ, as you have confessed, then is this last of Him; and the fact that He is, in His present mission rejected, is but the fulfillment of the second part of this prophecy." Hereupon arose a very warm discussion between the two Pharisees on the one side, and Lazarus alone on the other; the former contending that the prophecies referred to two distinct Christs, one of whom was to be lowly and a sufferer, and the other honorable and a conqueror; while Lazarus maintained that the seemingly opposite predictions referred to but one Christ in two different periods and circumstances of His life. He explained that His first advent was then, in their own day, being fulfilled before their very eyes; it was to be one of trial and suffering—"Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good," as saith the Prophet Isaiah.

Nicodemus, who had been listening thoughtfully, then raised his brows and asked doubtfully: "When His trials and sufferings are over, shall He then set up His kingdom?"

"The Master made that clear," explained Lazarus, "in His parable when He referred to Himself as a nobleman going into a far country to receive for Himself a kingdom and to return after a long time. Then—in the far distant future, shall He sit as the Lord's anointed upon the holy hill of Zion . . . 'and the uttermost parts of the earth shall be given for his inheritance and all nations must serve and obey him,' as the Psalmist tells us."

The incredulous Simon, stroking his beard, was anxious to change the subject, saying, "How can this man who holds all sickness in His power be subject to hunger and

weariness of body Himself? I would say unto Him, Physician, heal thyself!"

Looking quizzically at him, Lazarus asked: "Simon, thou art a teacher in Israel, what saith Moses of Christ?" But the learned Simon could not answer. Whereupon Nicodemus coming to his rescue, quoted: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee, a Prophet *from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hear.*"

"That is it," said Lazarus, with a note of triumph in his voice, "you see, He is a man like unto His brethren with the same weaknesses and temptations. His power over diseases is not for His own good, but for the benefit of the multitude and to show forth the divine power within Him. His miracles are used only as proofs of His Messiahship. He is subject to infirmities, hungers, thirsts; wearies and suffers as a mere man. But for His own glory and comfort, He never resorts to this divine power, but only to give attestation to His words of truth that He comes from God."

These last words seemed to greatly impress the serious-minded ruler, and after thanking Lazarus for his willing efforts, he said: "This man is doubtless no common prophet. When He comes into the city again, I shall be glad to hear from His own mouth His doctrines, and to witness some potent miracle." With these words, the two Pharisees quietly departed.

Nor was Lazarus to be considered as a reed shaken by the wind. The Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that Jesus was the Christ, that he should be put out of the synagogue. The leader of this movement was Isrlid, a Pharisee, who was a short, vigorous type of man, and he was determined that no inconvenient scruples of honesty, mercy or any other principle should hamper him in his crusade. Spurred by extreme envy of Jesus' miraculous power, he sought to entangle anyone of whom he had suspicion into a confession of his faith.

Entering the room where Lazarus was copying scripture close by, Isrlid engaged a fellow-scribe in conversation, artfully designed to entice Lazarus. Said the wicked Pharisee: "Knowest thou that this man, Jesus, doeth wonders among the people? These things are daily becoming more amazing. Whence think you He receives His power? Methinks He is a deceiver and does His works through Beelzebub."

"Ah! no," quickly answered the more modest scribe, "such miracles as this man performs, come not from satan. He claims to be the Messiah, but that I can never accept. He may be a prophet in a class with that peculiar John who baptized and who was beheaded; or even like Jeremias, sent to warn the people of their wickedness and God's impending judgments."

"Say not so," broke in the Pharisee, "compare not this man with Jeremias. Even the common people understood *he* was a prophet sent from God—but this fellow, a carpenter's son, unknown, unannounced, going about preaching that He is the Son of God and intends to set up His kingdom, without any power or authority! I say, impossible, and blasphemous!" To add emphasis to this remark he drew his hands together and then thrust them sharply to the side, an expression of uncompromising rejection. Lazarus, of an unobtrusive disposition, naturally would have chosen silence as the better part of discretion, but when he heard his beloved Master spoken of so dis-

(Concluded on next page)

THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

(Continued from page 4)

of the tax gatherers; for the taxing only should not have involved Mary in her physical condition. This observation strongly suggests that the taxing was placed at the time of some one of the yearly feasts, especially the feast involving the house of David, likely the Abib feast.

Another factor in favor of Abib as the month of Christ's birth is the incident of Christ's accompanying His parents to Jerusalem to the Passover feast. The narrative reads: "Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast" (Luke 2: 41, 42). In stating that He was twelve years old in Abib presupposes that He was born twelve years before in Abib.

Prophecy Points to Abib

Still another factor suggesting Abib as the month of the Nativity is Daniel's prophecy in Dan. 9: 25. Here the Angel Gabriel revealed to the prophet a definite number of years from a given point until the Messiah. "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks [weeks of years, Moffatt], and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." The rebuilding of the wall in Nehemiah's time agrees with the divine forecast of the wall being built in "troubled times." The effort of their enemies to stop the building was so effective that for a time Nehemiah's men were obliged to work with one hand and hold a fighting weapon in the other.

Nehemiah 2 indicates that Nehemiah's conversation with King Artaxerxes, in the Persian king's twentieth year, which resulted in the king's sending him to rebuild the wall, took place in the month Nisan, or Abib. Sixty-nine weeks of years would equal 483 years, and are we not justified in thinking that a God as orderly as the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who changeth not, would arrange that a stipulated number of years would be whole years? If we accept this concept, 483 years beginning with Nisan or Abib, would also end at Abib, placing Jesus' birth in the spring, in Abib.

The setting up of the tabernacle also seems to be typical of Christ's birth. Bible scholars have long been aware of the spiritual parallel by many literal figures under the law of Moses. In fact we have a Bible rule in Heb. 10: 1 which justifies such parallels. The Law had "a shadow of good things to come."

It is significant that Moses set up a literal tabernacle which was typical of the spiritual house of the Lord. "Christ as a Son over his own house: whose house are we" (Heb. 3: 6). The following passage gives further definition to the spiritual tabernacle. "For there was a tabernacle made; the first, . . . which was a figure for the time then present. . . . But Christ being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle. . . . We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 9: 2, 9, 11; 8: 1, 2).

It is further significant that the literal tabernacle was erected at a specific time, by divine decree. "The Lord spake unto Moses saying, On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation" (Ex. 40: 2). As the literal tabernacle was reared on the first day of the first month of God's year, would it not be fitting for Christ, the first stone fitted for the spiritual temple, to be born on the first day of the first month—Abib first?

THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS (conc.)

paragingly, every fiber of his loyal heart was aroused. He would not, he must not be a coward! He must defend Jesus even at the cost of being excommunicated from the synagogue!

Rising bravely to the occasion, and looking first at the more considerate scribe, he said: "The miracles of Jesus, you admit, could not come from Satan, but from God, while you deny His claim to be Messiah. Now, if Jesus truly came from God, as, looking at His miraculous power, you readily confess, then He cannot be a sinner; He, therefore, cannot say of Himself what is not true. Yet He asserts that He is the Christ. He, then, either *does* come from the Father, or He is a deceiver and there is no truth in Him! But you will not consent to charge such traits of character upon a man who heals with a word, who feeds the multitude and raises the dead to life; who has unlimited compassion for the sick and mercy for the sinner. A man who proclaims such pure precepts as He, and constantly enforces the necessity of holiness in order to gain the favor of God, must be pure and holy Himself."

"Just as I thought," broke in the Pharisee, looking at his friend and shaking his head significantly, "an ardent admirer of the false, unknown prophet whose days already are numbered."

Pausing a second and taking a deep breath in order to make a final point, Lazarus took a step closer to the Pharisee upon whom he now fixed his dark eyes as if discerning the intents of his evil heart, and said: "Do not, O Pharisee, by any subtle argument, attempt to avoid this conclusion! Jesus is the Christ, or you make both God and the Prophet deceivers. Jesus is the Christ, and let God be true, though all men be liars!" Then gathering his parchments, he walked to the door as though the subject needed no further discussion. Isrilid, somewhat taken aback by this sudden and unexpected accusation, had no time to lose. He quickly and naturally resorted to the weapon used by unscrupulous men when in an uncomfortable position—threat. Said he in a voice shaking with emotion: "I do not claim to be among the prophets, but before another moon waxes and wanes, I predict that thy friend, on account of His pretensions to being the Messiah, shall stand before the Sanhedrin and the high priest, to answer charges of blasphemy and sedition, among other accusations. And who knows, even thou also may be there with thy ready tongue to defend Him and thyself."

"I fear thee not nor what man can do. God knows how to take care of His own. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so high are God's ways above the sinister motives of evil men." Thus saying, Lazarus made his departure. *(To be continued next issue.)*

Our Coming King



IF A VISITANT from some of the wonderful planets on high, a total stranger to this world's history, to our systems, institutions and methods of life, should ask us the question, "What one individual has had the most powerful influence for good upon the life of your race?" the answer would unhesitatingly be, "The man Christ Jesus." The subtle influence of His gospel, even when mangled and demoralized by the theologians of the past and present, has given to the world at large blessings innumerable. For example: the time-honored institution of slavery, once a world-wide curse, has been practically eliminated; the position of women has been exalted. Christianity is civilizing and constructive in its effects, since it permits nothing which would tend to lower the standards of morals or of life.

If a code of laws and principles can have such a powerful influence, even upon a perverse generation, it is but fitting that four complete books of the New Testament should be devoted to a history of the life and works of its Founder, Jesus of Nazareth; that another whole book should record the missionary work of His disciples; that the remainder of the New Testament should contain an exposition of His teaching, and that the whole Bible should end with His wonderful personal message to us, sent by an angel to His servant John.

And yet, in the face of this, how far the world is from the religion of Jesus! In spite of the plain teaching, "Love one another," war has been and still is the normal condition of some nations, with all the world preparing for even greater struggles. One by one the moral principles of the Christian religion have been forgotten, until the world is now rushing madly to destruction, with the precipice only a short distance ahead.

Jesus Christ, a King in His own right, the Son of the Most High God, the Prince of the house of David, came the first time as a Lamb to the slaughter, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; created in all points like His brethren, tempted in all things as we are, yet none the less a King.

Even as great men in this world seldom come unannounced, the birth of Jesus was foretold thousands of years before by the prophets of the Lord, who saw in vision when, where, and under what circumstances the Messiah should come into the world. Moses says, "A

prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear." Isaiah prophesied, "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and call his name Immanuel." And again, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, ['The Father of the world to come,'] The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

Scores of prophecies appear in all the Old Testament, telling of the coming of this great King. And last came His personal forerunner, the fearless, eloquent John the Baptist, a herald worthy of a Prince.

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Looking backward, we see Jesus, born into the world under humble circumstances, in Bethlehem of Judea, we know not how many years ago, at this season. We see the remarkable announcement of His birth to the shepherds in the fields; we see their adoration—a type of the day when all kings shall bow down before Him and all nations shall serve Him; we picture the anxiety caused in the halls of Herod's palace by these unusual events, even to the issuing of the monstrous decree, condemning all the infants of Bethlehem to a cruel death. We see the young child and His parents flying for their lives over the desert into Egypt, not knowing what awaits them there. Returning in fear and trembling to their native land some years later, we see the boy Christ reared in the prosaic life of a mountain village, among the humble of this world, yet never coarsened by His surroundings; working with His hands at the carpenter's bench, yet not allowing His wonderful mental powers to become narrowed or benumbed by His daily toil. Imagination pictures Him with a rugged physique, the glow of perfect health, and brimming with vivacity of spirit. Such was His life for nearly thirty years, with but one outstanding event, when, at the age of twelve He lingered behind in Jerusalem, not to "see the sights" of the city, but to proclaim the truth to the doctors in the temple. We see him at the age of thirty,

forsaking the saw and hammer to be about his Father's business.

Conceding the authenticity of John's ministry by submitting to his baptism, He enters upon His public ministry, a short but eventful course. For three years the laws which govern the church of God were proclaimed to the Jewish world, with the same apparently discouraging results which it meets today. His gospel was plain, to the point, all uplifting, civilizing, and enlarging. Sincerity of purpose, gentleness and strength of character and masterful knowledge of the truth marked His career. Never once did He resort to trickery to gain a point against the crafty Pharisees. Never once did He compromise with evil. The simple record that "He went about doing good" tells the whole story.

And yet the world rejected their King in that day. We see Him arrested by order of the Sanhedrin, undergoing the indignities of a mock trial with false witnesses and a bloodthirsty judge; we see Him patiently enduring physical violence, and, in the end, crucified as a common criminal. Never once through this ordeal did His strength of character fail him. He lived like a god, and died like a man.

Behold Him on the morning of the first day of the week, bursting the bands of death asunder, rising from the tomb, bringing with Him the promise of life beyond the grave if we but live as He lived. For forty days He was with His people, comforting them, and then, His work completed, He was suddenly taken up from them into heaven, there to receive His reward. Did He leave us comfortless? Listen to the answer given by the angel upon this occasion: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Yes. He is coming; coming with salvation, coming as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, to rule the world in righteousness, to do in one thousand years far more than the wise and great of this world have ever dreamed of doing in the past six thousand years, to abolish war, to bring peace on earth, good will to men.

Let us work to be prepared to meet Him when He comes, and there is no time to delay: His coming is near, even at the door. Because we feel that we are ready does not mean that we really are. Let us compare ourselves with the standard given by the Master in His Word, and strive as never before to grow to manhood in Christ Jesus. Every year brings us nearer our reward or lessens our chance of gaining it. We decide this question ourselves—no one can do it for us.

The light is given to us, if we will but see it. We have seen His star in the East, let us come and worship Him. Personal acquaintance with the man Christ Jesus, through a keeping of His law, is the only way to realize anything beyond this short life. He has the keys of death and the grave; He has the power to "change our vile body and fashion it like unto His glorious body." His own testimonial of Himself bears the stamp of divinity and is truth: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive forevermore."

You'll find that a sunny disposition can help you advance not only in your work but in anything you do.

OBITUARY

LEWIS SIMON HOLDEN

It is a truism that in the midst of life, we are in death, for the Grim Reaper is ever at work among the mortals by whom we are surrounded.

Again our church community has been visited, the Fatal Hand taking from us one of the oldest members of our Rochester Church. And on March 4th we met to pay our last respects to Brother Lewis Simon Holden.

Our brother is survived by one daughter, Ruth E. Holden of this city and who had cared for her father most tenderly for many years, especially since the decease of the wife and mother, Sister Estella M. Holden, some four years ago. The deceased is survived also by one nephew, Randall Holden of Rochester and one neice, Mrs. Frank Farr of Livonia.

Funeral services were conducted at the Winchell Funeral Home by Brother K. E. Flowerday, burial in Mt. Hope Cemetery.

LORD! GIVE US STRENGTH

Cities, kingdoms, peoples pass
As do cloud-shadows on the grass;
The winds of Time blow them away:
Lord! give us strength to face the day.

*Lo! they have had their little hour
Of pomp and pageantry and power;
Like mists these things must melt away:
Lord! give us strength to face the day.*

A thousand years, Lord, in Thy sight
Are as a watch in the short night;
And hours of Time, they tick away:
Lord! give us strength to face the day.

*The stars of Nineveh and Tyre
Shine down on us with unslaked fire,
As when red Carthage blazed away:
Lord! give us strength to face the day.*

As Leisure and Folly soon are spent,
Swift follow Mirth and Merriment;
The joys of men, like men they pass away:
Lord! give us strength to face the day.

*But work endures. Out of the earth
New men, now hopes shall have their birth;
Therefore with humble hearts we pray:
Lord! give us strength to face the day.*

Work on in love; God will supply
All needed help, we need not die.
His Son shall soon this proud earth sway:
Lord! give us strength to gain the day.

There are lives that glow with friendly humanity and helpfulness; their presence is a blessing and their acts are benedictions. Like a touch of a cool, soft hand upon a fevered brow or a gourd of water to parched lips.

Your Questions Answered



BIBLICAL PERSONAL CURRENT

Do you have a question? Personal replies to Biblical questions will be sent to any correspondent, and counsel will be offered on problems pertaining to the spiritual life. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will publish only the most helpful discussions for the benefit of other readers. No names shall be mentioned.

Can anyone eat and drink damnation to their soul by eating literal bread and drinking literal wine, or is it by hearing the true word, and understanding it and not accepting it, or is it not?

The eating and drinking of bread and wine that brings condemnation as referred to in the question above, pertains to the communion service. The Lord's Supper is an evening observance, and also a yearly observance. The anniversary of the "same night" could occur once yearly only (I Cor. 11:23). The bread and juice of the grape partaken of at the Lord's Supper are symbolic, merely emblems with a deeper significance. The bread represents the Word of life, and the blood, the living out of the Word. In partaking of the Lord's Supper we renew our covenant to suffer a complete death to sin (Rom. 6:10, 11), to cease making provision for the flesh to fulfill any of its unlawful desires. A seriousness must accompany the renewing of our covenant, or partaking of the Lord's Supper.

It is not a compact to be entered into lightly or without due consideration. But a vow once made becomes a binding instrument: "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better it is that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay." A man who fails to keep his word is frowned upon by honest men, and the Lord's attitude toward the man who dishonors his agreement would be equally denunciatory. The language Paul uses in I Cor. 11:27-29 is clear and forceful: "Wherefore whosoever shall eat of this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

When we partake of this cup we agree to live up to its demands in the full or take the consequences of our failure. "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil," said the Eternal through the Lawgiver, Moses. After we agree to accept the challenge of death and live for God, we either must live up to our covenant or suffer the penalty for our breach of promise. It is a fearful thing to break a promise we have made to God.

Who were the "angels" of the seven churches in Asia to whom Jesus sent messages through John the Revelator?

The term *Angel* is used both of mortal and immortal messengers. When Jesus sent His angel from heaven after He had ascended, it was an immortal messenger, as were any and all of the angels who were sent from God to earth on expeditions or with instructions for His people. But in various Scripture texts the term is used also of mortal messengers, as in Jude 5, 6. The "angels which kept not their first estate," were the ten unfaithful spies.

See Numbers 13, 14. Chapter 13:1, 2 defines them as *rulers*, "heads of the children of Israel." They were mortal men called to high estate but who fell by transgression.

The angel addressed in Revelation was the one in charge of the church, someone living on the earth, in one of those cities mentioned in Asia and bearing the message of God's Word to the people there.

Was Peter saved before he denied Christ, or was he saved after he was crucified?

The Bible teaches that no one is "saved" until he is given immortality at the Day of Judgment. Salvation comes at the end and not at the start of the race. "He that endureth unto the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22; 24:13). We must work and wait for Christ to *come* and save us (Isa. 25:9). Peter was not converted, nor had he finished the work before Christ was crucified, as proved by the words of Jesus in Luke 22:32, "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." The names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, were seen in the wall of the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:14), and Peter must have been one of them. Peter had finished the work and will be worthy to be saved or receive immortality from Christ at the Day of Judgment.

Please explain how our work in the Lord could be in vain (I Cor. 15:58).

The word "vain" has for some of its definitions: "devoid of real value, useless, worthless." Moffatt and Goodspeed translate it, "your labor is never thrown away." Weymouth's translation says, "your toil is not fruitless in the Lord." From these definitions and translations we can know that our labor in the Lord will be profitable and helpful to our salvation in the Day of Judgment.

Do we have divine healing nowadays like they did in Jesus' day?

Divine healing was a part of the Holy Spirit power in the days of Jesus and the apostles, and was withdrawn at the close of the Jewish Age when Jerusalem fell. No church or individual has the power to do works by the power of the Holy Spirit as did the church of the first century. That power was given the disciples only for a limited time, and when the perfect had come (Ps. 19:7) then the partitive arrangement (I Cor. 13:9, 10) was done away with. This occurred about A. D. 70. The perfect, the complete written Word of God, the Bible, is our only source of information from God in this age. It being the thorough furnisher in all wisdom and doctrine (II Tim. 3:16), and capable of convincing people of the truths of God. The gifts, the Holy Spirit power is not essential to becoming worthy of salvation.

What denomination wrote the Old Testament, also the New Testament?

It was not written by any denomination, class or society of individuals, nor sect. See II Peter 1:19. Moses and the prophets wrote the Old Testament, and certain of the apostles and disciples of Christ wrote the New Testament.

Meditations

On the Word

"Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God" (Psalm 50: 23).

Here and there throughout the Scriptures of truth we find a text which seems to tell the whole story in a few words, leaving no room for argument or question. Such a verse is Ecclesiastes 12: 13, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

The passage upon which we meditate is of the same piece, a remarkable ending to a remarkable Psalm. In the foregoing verses the Eternal calls attention to His plan with the children of men, His judgments at the coming of His Son to earth, His might and dominion, His mercy and justice, and the fate of the disobedient; and our text comes as a fitting conclusion to a chapter of stately and significant phrases. The ideas of the Creator are so deeply imbedded in these words that they mean the same backward as forward. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me." That is plain enough; but it is just as unequivocal and perhaps less open to misunderstanding if we read, "Whoso glorifieth me offereth praise."

That is even plainer, is it not? For there is a great deal of lip-service which passes for praise in this world, but which is, in the light of Proverbs 28: 9, nothing short of abomination to God. That sort of praise certainly does not glorify Him; but to do all, whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do, with an eye single to the glory of God, is the only song of praise which reaches the ear of the Almighty. This is confirmed in Hebrews 13: 15, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." The *sacrifice* of praise—that is strange but significant phraseology. Lip-service, whether the sonorous litany of a formal church or the ecstatic hallelujahs of an emotional camp-meeting, calls for no sacrifice. But the daily "dying to sin," the offering of our bodies a living sacrifice (Rom. 12: 1), is acceptable with God, and a life so ordered will prove at the great Assize a more eloquent plea, a sweeter hymn of praise, and incense more fragrant than all the fine phrases and majestic songs and impressive rituals offered through the centuries by those in darkness, the blind leaders and their blind followers.

Such a life, though utterly lacking in musical sense, and unable to sing a note, can become an anthem of praise, abundant and rich with the harmony and melody of developing character, growing strength, overflowing faith. This glorification of God which is acceptable praise is not something separate and apart from our daily routine, but covers and controls every act, word and thought of our life, becoming a veritable part of our being. It is not a pastime or a part-time activity, nor a thing to be entered into lightly or unadvisedly, but only after due consideration and comparison of sacrifice with reward. Body and mind, affections, ambitions and emotions must all be brought under the altar. Nothing is left to serve the flesh,

or self, when a full and unconditional surrender is made.

In Paul's day the Corinthian church, or a fraction thereof, seems to have advocated the strange and perverted idea that the work of the Gospel was purely a mental affair, and that so long as they served God with the mind, deeds of the body were of no consequences. In the atmosphere of moral depravity for which Corinth was notorious, this notion easily opened the way to the grossest immorality, which the Apostle sternly rebukes in I Cor. 5 and 6. "What?" he exclaims, "know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit . . . and ye are not your own? . . . Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Not only this, but there is a penalty. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (I Cor. 3: 17). The body, as the agent of the mind, is strictly responsible for its actions, with no allowances made or excuses accepted. In our natural condition, the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak; in the strength of Jehovah we can say, "The spirit is willing and the flesh *must*."

"And to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God." The sixteenth century construction is slightly misleading, due to the use of the word "conversation." Today, of course, the term refers to speech; but the dictionary gives as archaic meanings, "Behavior; conduct; deportment." That is the meaning of the word in this Psalm. True, it includes speech, for the tongue is a very stubborn and unruly member and will probably be the last thing brought into subjection; but it is only one of the elements in this "conversation."

It is interesting to compare other translations of this text, not that they are better—for they are not—but they give us an idea. "Whoever holds by my rules in his life, I will let him enjoy my help" (Moffatt). "To him who heeds the way, I will show God's deliverance" (Smith). "There is a way by which I will show him the salvation of God" (Douay). Also the marginal rendering in the A. V.: "to him that disposeth his way, etc." Note that in nearly every instance the word *way* is introduced, which must be the idea imbedded in the original Hebrew. Historians tell us that in the early years of the true Church, before the term "Christian" was generally accepted, it was known simply as the Way. And so it is—a way of life, a strait and narrow way leading to eternal glory. If we heed the Way, and at the same time consider our own ways (Hag. 1: 7), diligently comparing the two, holding the law in one hand and our soul in the other (Ps. 119: 109), and if we mold our lives to fit the pattern, we shall be shown the salvation of God.

There are two ways of being shown this salvation, and it makes all the difference in the world at what distance we view it. One class shall come from the east, from the west, from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God (Luke 13: 29). "Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev. 19: 9). The other class, the covenant-breakers, will see it, too, but from the other side of the door. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out" (Luke 13: 28). Then, if never before, we will realize that we have paid too high a price for the doubtful privilege of having our own way.



GLEANINGS

MAKE THE VERY MOST OF TIME

Man's truest wisdom is to regard everything in life as changeable. No matter where we place our trust, we must always qualify our action with the words, "This too shall pass away."

Time is the only thing that never ceases to be.

And the most precious possession of life is the twenty-four hours which the Creator allots to us each day.

Time is the changeless possession of mankind. And the more one has the wealthier one is, and in this, youth is wealthiest of all.

Time is the equal possession of mankind. Without time, nothing is possible. With it, everything is.

Said Emerson, "Give me health and a day, and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous."

Said Franklin, "If thou wouldst lay hold on life, save time, for time is the stuff that life is made of."

Said Jesus, "Say not, yet four months and then cometh the harvest, Lo the fields are already white unto harvest."

After all, the only thing we possess is today.



Above all things, and at all times, practice yourself in good humor; this, of all human qualities, is the most amiable and endearing to society.



A HAPPY DAY

*A heart full of thankfulness,
A thimbleful of care,
A soul of simple hopefulness,
An early morning prayer.*

*A smile to greet the morning with;
A kind word as the key
To open the door and greet the day
Whate'er it brings to thee.*

*A patient trust in Providence,
To sweeten all the way,
All these, combined with thoughtfulness,
Will make a happy day.*

"Seek the

Lord

and his

strength,

seek his

face

continually."

SMILE AND FORGET

If there's something on your mind
That's bothering you a lot;
If the whole world seems unkind,
And you do not know just what
You will ever do today
With all your trouble and your fear;
If you think there is no way
To make worry disappear—
Just remember it's been done
By sad hearts many a time.
If you only know, a sun
Waits, its rays on you to shine.
Ah, tomorrow will be Spring;
'Twill be dry where now 'tis wet,
And the gayest birds will sing,
If you'll just smile and forget.

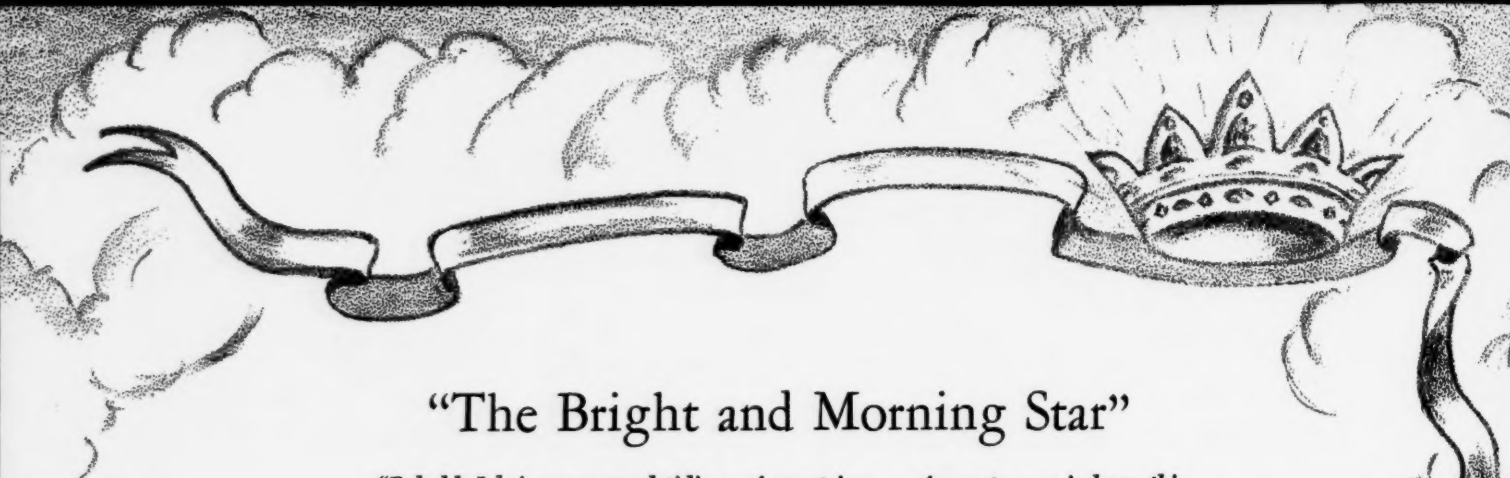


The Passing Years

The months and years speed on,
Like clouds that drift
Across the summer sky—
So light, so swift,
Sometimes we'd like again
To see their forms, but when
We look, they're gone!

So with our life that's past,
We'd have it still,
And shape it—if we could—
More for His will.
But no. He makes us learn
Time passed can ne'er return—
Alas, 'tis gone!

Let us henceforth keep
More close to Him,
Whose great unchanging love
Shall ne'er grow dim,
Himself alone to please—
Each fleeting moment sieze,
'Ere it is gone.



"The Bright and Morning Star"

"Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy . . . for unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

The sweet accents of the voice of this heavenly messenger had scarcely ceased to vibrate, when a multitude of the celestial hosts joined their voices in wondrous praise to God demonstrating the significance and importance, not only of the birth of Christ, but also of the day on which it occurred.

Of the early life of this wonderful character of whom prophets wrote and psalmist sang we know but little, excepting the incident which occurred when at twelve years old, He went up with His parents to celebrate the feast of the passover, where He confounded the doctors. He became a man of commanding intellect and high culture. The close investigation of historical criticisms has secured more universal admission that the life of Christ was a life of which the main outlines are historically certain. Thus we behold in Jesus a unique and sinless personality with whom no human being can be compared, either in His character, or the results that He accomplished in His short ministry. His birth closed the history of the past, and inaugurated a new era. His birth changed the reckoning of time from B. C. to A. D., and the most brilliant civ-

ilized nations of the world look upon the transcendent power of His personality as being due to His birth, devotion and absolute sinlessness, which constituted the unique character of His individuality. He alone has furnished mankind with a perfect ideal. His teaching was so simple, yet abounding with illustrations most beautiful and intelligible, freely and with such ease drawn from nature, and the daily incidents of both social and domestic life. It flowed without reserve on every fitting occasion: on the highway, the hillside, on the lake or at its shore, by the well, or at the banquet; surpassing in love, or learning, meekness, power, or ability all that preceded it. Not one unwise sentiment or lurking fallacy, but all vivacity, intelligibility, intending only to convince and save. It inspired the aims of the noblest culture and made the moral being the chief aim and end of life. The emancipation of the world from serfdom and tyranny has been won as the result of His birth and teaching. In view of the birth of such a Person, it is no wonder that the angels were sent to celebrate the day of His birth with songs and praise for such a Deliverer.

